

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 8, 2006. Claims 19-37 remain pending in this application. Claims 19, 37, and 38 are the independent claims. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In response to the Office Action's objection to the title, abstract, drawings, claims, and specification, Applicants respectfully believe the amendments to the title, abstract, claim 22, and specification render the objections moot and respectfully request their withdrawal. Additionally, with respect to the drawing objections, Applicants respectfully note that reference character 6 designates the same part, i.e., a rod, in Figs. 1, 4, and 5. The shape of the rod does not render it a different part. Thus Applicants respectfully traverse the objection under 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4). Additionally, with respect to the objection under 37 CFR 1.83(a) for failing to show every feature of the invention, flexibility is a property of a structure that cannot be shown in a drawing. As it is a material property of a structural element, it need not be shown in the drawing. Further, the elliptical rod of Claim 30 is depicted in Fig. 3 (a circle is an ellipse). Further, the straight and curved edges of Claim 33 are depicted in Fig. 5. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections to the drawings.

In response to the Office Action's rejection of Claims 19-36 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 statutory double patenting, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and request its withdrawal. Claim 19 clearly contains elements (e.g., substantial total internal reflection, angular width controlling light distribution, etc.) which do not exist in Claim 19 of U.S. Patent No. 6,783,269. As the claims are not identical subject matter, Applicants believe the § 101 rejection to be improper and request its withdrawal.

In response to the Office Action's non-statutory double patenting rejection of Claim 37, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and request its withdrawal. Claim 37 is patentably distinct at least because it is a method claim, whereas Claim 19 of U.S. patent 6,783,269 is a device.

The Office Action's rejected Claims 19-29, 37, and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Masutani et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,488,397; hereinafter "Masutani"). The Office Action also rejected Claims 30-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masutani. The Office Action also rejected Claim 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masutani in view of Ashall (U.S. Patent No. 5,390,466; hereinafter "Ashall"). The Office Action also rejected Claims 35-36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masutani in view of Reid et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,267,492; hereinafter "Reid"). Applicants

respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Masutani fails to recite or suggest the outcoupling material is distributed in such a way as to ensure uniform light distribution along the length of the rod. The Office Action indicates that Masutani recites this feature at Col. 3, lines 38-45.

When a reflecting layer is too thin, the efficiency of light reflection would be insufficient. When a reflecting layer **5** is too thick, there would be no significant improvement in the efficiency of light reflection in spite of an increased printing cost and a trouble of the layer easily coming off. Therefore, the thickness of the reflecting layer **5** should be determined in consideration of these matters. It is usually about 20 to 200 μm .

Rather, Masutani recites that the thickness of the reflecting layer (e.g., paint depth from the surface) should be thick enough to prevent coming off. This fails to recite or suggest the outcoupling material is distributed along an angular width in such a way as to ensure uniform light distribution along the length of the rod. Thus Applicants traverse the § 102(e) rejection of Claim 19 over Masutani.

Claims 37 and 38 recite a method and device substantially corresponding to Claim 19 and are believed patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 20-36 depend from independent Claim 19 discussed above and are believed patentable for at least the same reasons. In addition, Applicants respectfully believe Claims 20-36 to be independently patentable and request separate consideration of each claim. In addition, Applicants respectfully believe the above amendments and remarks render the § 103 rejections of Claims 30-36 moot. Withdrawal of the § 103 rejections is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Waxler', is written over a horizontal line.

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